



Smog Check Stations

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The State of California has five different types of facilities performing automotive-related functions under the Smog Check program. The various stations are designed to provide consumers with multiple options to meet their needs.

Test and Repair

Test-and-Repair Stations

Test-and-repair stations are licensed by the state to provide Smog Check tests and repairs to most vehicles. Under current law, test-and-repair stations are prohibited from certifying repaired Gross Polluters or vehicles directed to Test-Only stations for inspection. Only Test-Only stations and Gross Polluter Certification Pilot stations are able to certify repaired Gross Polluters.

Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair Stations

Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair stations are licensed test-and-repair stations. While they cannot certify Gross Polluters, Gold Shield stations guarantee the emissions-related repairs they make on vehicles. If a repaired vehicle does not pass its re-test within 10 days or 1,000 miles after repairs have been made, the Gold Shield station will make additional emissions-related repairs at no further cost to the consumer.

Gross Polluter Certification Pilot Stations

Gross Polluter Certification Pilot stations are Gold Shield stations that have been selected by the state to participate in a statewide study that will evaluate the effectiveness of allowing Gross Polluters to be repaired and certified at the same location. Approximately 100 Gold Shield stations throughout California are taking part in the pilot.

Test-Only Stations

Test-Only stations are licensed by the state to perform only tests on vehicles and are prohibited from performing any repair services. Gross Polluters can also be certified at these stations. In addition, high-polluting vehicles in the state's smoggiest regions (Enhanced Areas) are directed to these stations for their initial Smog Checks as specified on their DMV registration renewal form from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Consumer Assistance and Referee (CAR) Centers

Consumer Assistance and Referee Centers are state-contracted facilities that handle special cases affecting Smog Check consumers. They grant Repair Cost Waivers and Economic Hardship Extensions. They also perform a number of other important functions for consumers, including: certifying vehicles receiving Limited Parts Exemptions; certifying grey market vehicles, specially-constructed vehicles, and vehicles with engine changes; verifying certain disputes between a shop and consumer; and helping resolve other Smog Check issues. Referee Centers do not perform initial Smog Checks unless Bureau of Automotive Repair officials specifically direct a motorist to one. To make an appointment at a Referee Center, call 1-800-622-7733.

Consumer Tips

As with other consumer products and services, it is always best to shop around for quality service that best meets your needs. Since market forces drive the price of a Smog Check and any related repair work, some stations may charge different prices than others. To determine what services a station provides, or for other information about the Smog Check program, please call 1-800-952-5210 or log onto the Smog Check website at www.smogcheck.ca.gov.